

Barnet Refugee Service



BARNET
 **REFUGEE
SERVICE**

ANNUAL REPORT 2015/2016

Barnet Refugee Service

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Registered Charity: 1107965

Company Ltd by Guarantee: 5243595

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Foreword from the Chair



Since our last annual report the world has seen an unprecedented immigration crisis, the largest since the World War II. With the world in turmoil many of people have seen no option but to seek safety and better quality of life elsewhere leaving their homeland behind. For most of them this has meant leaving their belongings, possessions, family and loved ones for an uncertain future and unknown

destinations.

The heartache of parents, whose only hope of securing a better future for their children is to send them unaccompanied to other countries, is unimaginable. The pain of a parent who had to leave their family behind to seek refuge and asylum in an unfamiliar part of the world with only a glimmer of hope of an eventual reunion, is indescribable.

For the last eleven years these are the people whom our organisation, Barnet Refugee Services (BRS), has striven to support. People who have escaped persecutions and hardships in their home countries and arrive here at their most vulnerable state.

BRS prides itself in providing help with life skills, emotional and legal issues to facilitate integration of immigrants and asylum seekers into their new communities. We are committed to ensuring that individuals and families, young and old from all walk of lives are equipped to make Britain their home and get resettle in their new environment. Our range of services from advice, English classes, emotional support

projects and life skills for mother and toddlers, women and men groups to youth activities for our younger clients many of whom arrived here as unaccompanied children, are aimed to give confidence, knowledge and emotional stability for people to settle in their new way of life and most importantly to thrive again.

As a charity with limited means we are grateful to Barnet council and the National Lottery and the John Lyon's Charity for their financial support. In addition we are blessed with generosity of many smaller charitable organisations and individuals. This extends to our army of volunteers who give their time free to support and improve lives of our clients. Thank You to you all!

My sincere gratitude goes to Dr Nazee Akbari our Executive Director and the staff whose commitment to BRS knows no bound. I am also thankful to all our trustees, with a special mention of our treasurer Mr Ponusamy Karunaharan, whose collective effort and devotion to BRS has sustained and propelled the organisation into excellence.

We at the BRS are determined to support our clients to achieve a successful integration and will be with them in celebrating their community contributions.

Zoe Aslanpour
Chair

The heartache of parents, whose only hope of securing a better future for their children is to send them unaccompanied to other countries, is unimaginable

Message from the Director



I am greatly proud to present this annual report on the performance of Barnet Refugee Service for the 2015/16 financial year.

2015 was a significant year for anyone working with asylum seekers and refugees as we have seen the tragic scenes of people fleeing for their lives and their desperation to find a place of safety. The arrival on Europe's doorstep of more than a million people from conflict-affected countries

like Syria focused attention on the global refugee crisis, the burden of which, until now, has been carried almost exclusively by poorer nations in the Middle East, Africa and Asia. As European governments argued about how to respond to the crisis, a single photograph of a drowned Syrian child brought the human story to the fore. The image of 3-year-old Aylan Kurdi lying on a Turkish beach prompted a global outpouring of community compassion and generosity. Our local general public moved by the plight of so many in Europe to do something practical to help refugees and asylum seekers in Barnet. This has led to many opportunities for us to expand services engaging new volunteers and funding support. We were touched by the members of public reporting a particular appetite for hosting asylum seekers where a number of new initiatives started as a result.

During the year we celebrated our 10th anniversary. 10 years on, and in 2015-16 we feel we are fortunate to be able to support over 1000 refugees and asylum seekers under our "Integrated Holistic Model of Support". None of this would have been possible without the support and the generosity of our funders, in a particular, Barnet Council, The Big lottery Fund and the John Lyons Charity and other donors. I would also like to thank all supporters and friends of the BRS who give donations and help us in achieving our aims.

On behalf of our clients I would like to thank for the support we have received from so many people who share our ethos and our beliefs. Together we will strive to eliminate discrimination and ensure fairness and equality for all migrants and refugees. We will strive to ensure that we can all live in a society that is tolerant, welcoming and humane. A society that treats people, whatever their colour or creed, as human beings and not as numbers to be reduced and repelled.

"We will strive to ensure that we can all live in a society that is tolerant, welcoming and humane."

There is no doubt BRS's effectiveness is a tribute to its skilful and dedicated staff and volunteers. We are proud of the remarkable care and commitment they all provide and wish to acknowledge them all for that perseverance.

Last but not least, my deep-felt appreciation goes to the Board of Trustees who has given me and the team ongoing support and motivation. Their presence has ensured the continuing provision of a proficient, transparent and accountable service to those who seek our help, trying to alleviate the suffering of so many asylum seekers and refugees.

Nazee Akbari
Executive Director

Our Staff

BRS ANNUAL REPORT 2015/2016



Naze Akbari
Executive Director



Farida Stanikzai
Operations Manager



Leila Shams
Office Manager



Nousheen Ashtiani
Health &
Social Care Advisor



Astrid Flippi
Refugee Youth Worker



Shahrzad Porabdullah
Emotional Support
Coordinator



Jana Gigl
Volunteers Coordinator
(left July 2015)



Josephine Durisimi – Etti
Integration Officer
Finance Officer



Anita Koci
Sessional Youth Worker



Sara Hessabi
ESOL Teacher



Abdul Moghrabi
Men's Group Coordinator



Tanya Novick
Women's Group
Coordinator



Ahmed Lolai
Gardening Coordinator



Ophelie De Cuyper
International Intern



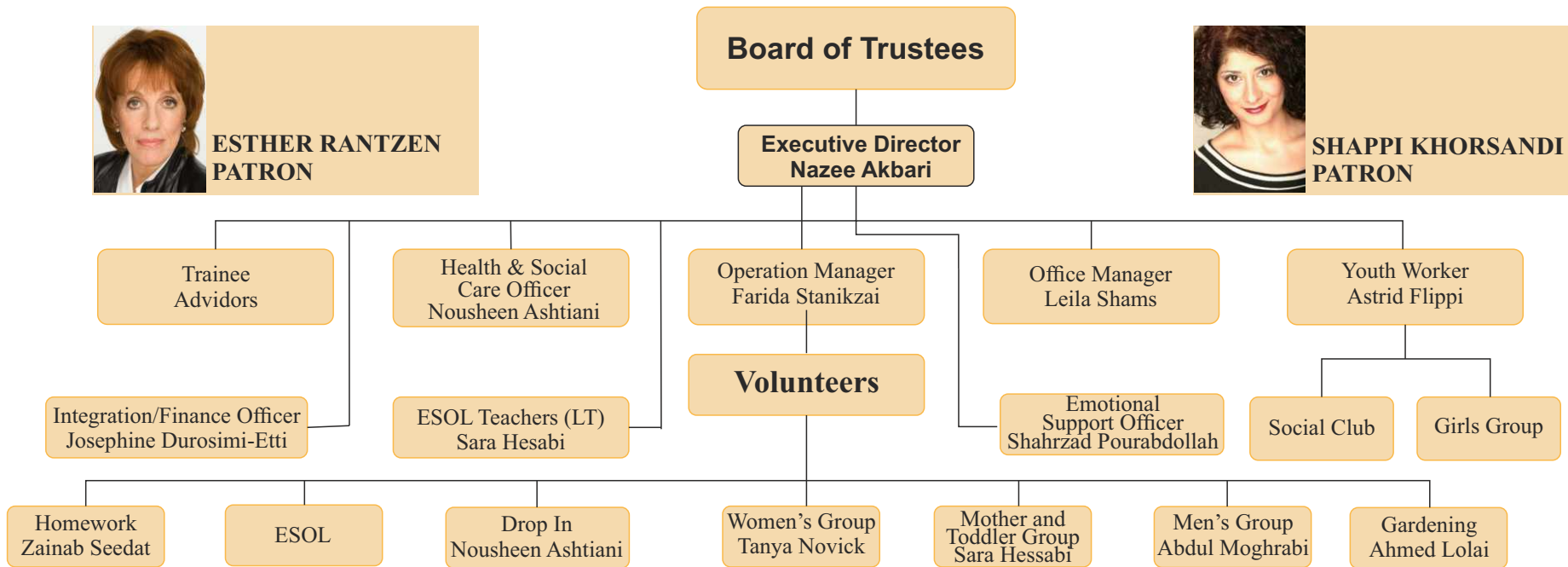
David Curtis
Ring – Youth Art
Consultant

Organisational Chart

Trustees Serving in 2015-2016

Zoe Aslanpour (Chair)
Ponusamy Karunaharan (Treasurer)
Miranda Levey (Secretary)
Roger Selby
Shubhi Raymond
Tanya Novick
Golnar Bokaei
Helal Atayee

Board of Trustees: From left sitting Zoe Aslanpour, Golnar Bokaei, Tanya Novick
 From Left standing: Shubi Raymond, Ponusamy Karunaharan (Not in the picture: Miranda Levey, Roger Selby, Helal Atayee)



Director's Report

Annual Report for the year 2015/16

This document accompanies the Annual Accounts, copies of which are available on request.

Introduction

Barnet Refugee Service is situated at:

8th Floor

Hyde House

The Hyde

London NW9 6LH

Telephone 020 8905 9002

Fax 020 8905 9003

Email advice@b-r-s.org.uk

Website www.b-r-s.org.uk

Registered Charity: 1107965

Company Ltd by Guarantee: 5243595

Incorporated as company September 2004

Our Memorandum and Articles of Association are available for inspection at our office.

Financial Statement

A summary of our audited accounts for the year ending 31st March 2016 can be found on page ??.

The Board of Trustees are satisfied with the performance of the charity during the year and the position at 31st March 2016 and considers that the charity is in a position to continue its activities during the coming year, and that the charity's assets are adequate to fulfil its obligations.

It is the policy of the trustees that reserves to cover three months' operating costs plus potential redundancy liabilities to be built as soon as is

practically possible. The minimum reserves will be two months' operating costs.

Current Funding

Funds from the following funders were received during the year and have been utilised towards achieving our aims:

- NHS Barnet & Barnet Council
- The City Bridge Trust
- The Big Lottery Fund
- The John Lyon's Charity
- The Zakat Foundation
- The Catholic Women's League
- Al-Mizan Charitable Trust
- The London Catalyst
- The Catholic Women's League
- London Churches Refugee Fund
- The Ruth Hyman Trust

Our History

Barnet Refugee Service is a charitable organisation formed by the merging of two projects established in 1997; the Refugee Health Access Project and Homeless Action in Barnet - Asylum Seekers Project. Barnet Refugee Service has been an independent charity since April 2005.

Our Ethos

BRS, an independent charity since April 2005, works in partnership with individuals and agencies to improve the quality of life and promote the physical, social and mental well-being of asylum seekers and

refugees who live work or study in or near the London Borough of Barnet and neighbouring boroughs. At the core of service delivery is its belief in the positive contribution refugees and asylum seekers can make within a culturally and ethnically diverse society. BRS is committed to involving asylum seekers and refugees in the planning, decision making and activities of the charity, believing this is the best way to achieve its aims.

Statement of values

Barnet Refugee Service believes that everyone is born equal and that asylum is a fundamental human right. We recognise that many people in our society experience discrimination or lack of opportunity for reasons which are not fair. These include: race, religion, creed, colour, national and ethnic origin, immigration status, political beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability (including mental illness), HIV status, marital status, responsibility for dependants, appearance, geographical area, social class, income level or 'criminal' record. Barnet Refugee Service will challenge discrimination and lack of opportunity in its own policy and practice and will help other organisations and individuals to do the same.

Barnet Refugee Service aims to create a culture that respects and values each others' differences and sees these differences as an asset to our work as they improve our ability to meet the needs of the organisations and people we serve.

Director's Report

Our Vision:

Through its work BRS envisages:

1. A future where refugees and Asylum seekers recognize themselves and are recognized by others as human beings of equal status in society.
2. A greater understanding and positive image in the wider community of the contribution made by refugees and asylum seekers and the issues which they have to deal with.
3. Quicker and greater integration of refugees and asylum seekers through access to improved services, particularly in health, housing, education and employment.
4. Greater understanding among refugees and asylum seekers of their rights and responsibilities.
5. A well established and accessible Barnet Refugee Service, working impartially in partnership with other relevant organisations to identify and meet the changing needs of refugees and asylum seekers.
6. Enabling a fuller contribution of refugees to civic life through the promotion of social cohesion.
7. Local policies and services which reflect the needs of diverse asylum seeker and refugee communities.
8. A more powerful voice for refugees and asylum seekers in Barnet and neighbouring boroughs.

Our Objectives

1. To provide information, advice and support

services to asylum seekers and refugees

2. To help promote equality of access to health care, social care, housing, legal representation, education and training for asylum seekers and refugees.
3. To provide and enhance educational and employment opportunities available for asylum seekers and refugees.
4. To increase awareness of the needs, rights and entitlements of asylum seekers and refugees in relation to health, social care, housing, training, education and employment.
5. To act as an information resource for statutory agencies, voluntary organisations and the wider community.
6. To ensure that service providers deliver culturally sensitive and appropriate services to asylum seekers and refugees.
7. To assist destitute and/or homeless refugees and asylum seekers to access emergency food and support.
8. To help refugees and asylum seekers overcome isolation and regain their confidence and self-esteem through emotional support, eco-therapy, social activities and structured projects thus enabling them to integrate into society.
9. To significantly influence local and national strategies and policies with regard to refugees and asylum seekers.
10. To provide volunteering opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers (including young people) to develop their skills and help them to access higher education and employment.

11. To provide emotional and social activities to young refugees and asylum seekers to develop their confidence and skills.

Fundraising Strategy

The Board of Trustees have established a Funding and Finance Strategy Committee who develop and monitor the progress of their fundraising strategy. It is the aim of BRS to meet its funding needs through several funding bodies. Our community fundraising committee works hard to maintain the funding stream through donations from members, local businesses and organizations and the general public.

Donations

We received over £8000 cash donations from many individuals, organisations and faith groups. We cannot name the countless individuals and organisations who have given their generous support in so many ways. Without their goodwill we would be unable to provide our vital emergency support. We would particularly like to thank, all schools and faith groups for their ongoing support. During the year food was donated from numerous churches, temples and synagogues and schools for Harvest Collections. Although we had closed our emergency support Drop in but we managed to give out food parcels to destitute asylum seekers from our office. For our end of year party we were donated many gifts from various sources including faith groups and local schools and members of the public.

Director's Report

Our special thanks go to the following faith groups, local businesses, and individuals who supported us either by cash or donation in kind: Harrow Food Bank, Khavatin Muslim Ladies, The Catholic Women's League, London Churches Refugee Fund, Ruth Hyman Trust, The Sacred Heart Church, St. Michael and All Angels in Mill hill, St Mary at Finchley Parish Church, the Trinity Church in Colindale, Pakistan Ladies Group, First Give through, the Trinity Church in North Finchley, the Sarum Hall School, the Gail's Artisan Bakery, Daniel's Bakery, the Pret a Manger and Lola's Cakes at Brent Cross, Hendon Sainsbury's and Tesco. It was not practical to value these vital donations but we believe the retail value to be in excess of £10,000.

Small Grants for Individuals

Refugees and asylum seekers and in particular destitute asylum seekers are the most vulnerable members of society. Some of them are not entitled to any support and for those who are, they might be living below poverty line. We are delighted that we managed to raise over £10,000 to support desperate individuals and their families whom had nowhere to go and had given up hope. This was only possible with the support of The National Zakat Foundation, Al-mizan Charitable Trust, The Catholic Women's League, Khavatin Muslim Ladies, Pakistan Ladies Group and many individual donors. On behalf of our clients we thank them all for their ongoing support. The small grants covered the costs of education and training, household items, medical and mobility, IT equipment and subsistence.

“I don not know how to thank BRS for their support. They got a computer for my child!”

Case Study 1

Dr. Helal Atayee

I am Helal Atayee, I am refugee from Afghanistan. After graduating from High School in Afghanistan I worked as a project manager in Samaritan's Purse International Relief (NGO) for 18 months. My passion for helping others led me to go to Turkey to study medicine in 2004. I graduated as a medical doctor in 2011 and returned to Afghanistan to work as a doctor but due to difficulties and unrest in Afghanistan I had no choice but to leave my country. I came to the UK in 2012.



Finding my status and identity was not an easy task in the UK. I started working as a volunteer Health Befriender and a senior Healthcare Assistant in Ashton Lodge and Refugee Council between 2012 and 2014. I joined BRS as a volunteer befriender in 2015 which gave a structure to my life. This voluntary position helped me a great deal in medical field because I was registering refugees/asylum seeker with GPs, Opticians, Dentists, taking them to hospital appointments and acting as an interpreter, it helped me a lot with my medical knowledge, keeping me in the loop. The most important support I received from BRS was the financial support to do my English and Medical PLAB exam costs which enabled me to qualify as a doctor in Sept 2015.

Becoming a qualified doctor gave me the opportunity to work with the Doctors of The World Project as well as teaching medicine at Common Stations Medical Training Course (it is a medical training course teaching overseas doctors to qualify as a registered doctor in the UK) followed by my official employment as a doctor in Newham University Hospital. My long term plan is to become a Cardiology Consultant in the UK.

Barnet Refugee Service is a great organisation passionately supporting those in need. BRS gave me a new family and I feel every member of BRS is like a member of my family. They are absolutely nice, caring and polite.

As a small contribution to BRS I joined the Board of Trustees in July 2015 and hope that my life experience as a refugee together with my medical background can help the management committee of BRS to govern this valuable organisation and develop services further based on identified needs.

Director's Report



Advice

We provide advice, information and support to refugees and asylum seekers on a variety of issues, promoting equal access to services, particularly health.

We have seen 1064 clients which include over 408 new clients and handled over 7000 enquiries including 1905 cases during the last year.

We maintained strong links with other advice providers with whom we cross refer. We continued offering legal services by providing a fortnightly Immigration advice surgery in partnership with Ata & Co Solicitors.

Outreach Advice Clinics

Our team of advice workers offered outreach clinics at Advice and Information Centre, Edgware Community Hospital on Tuesday and Friday afternoons and served over 460 clients with various issues.

Health and Wellbeing

Much of our work is directly health focused such as the advice work where we saw clients with over 1200 health related enquiries. During the 2015/16 our health focused activities included:

- Mental health support project supporting young refugees
- Mothers & Toddlers Group to promote Healthy

Life Style by health promotion workshops

- Production of an illustrated handbook for Maternity Dept by our ESOL teachers for mothers with limited or no English
- Running ESOL classes with emphasis on vocabulary for visiting the doctor and health related subject
- Health promotion workshops for young refugees through our youth activities
- Active partnership with the Multilingual Wellbeing Service, in partnership with 3 other organisations and NHS Barnet focusing on better wellbeing of ethnic minorities in Barnet.
- 2 outreach surgeries based at Edgware Hospital.
- Fully participated in Barnet Mental Health Partnership Board meeting and other similar network meetings i.e. Mental Health Network meeting, or Multicultural Network meeting, as a planning group member, we participated in organizing the Barnet Mental Health Event
- Policy work with NHS: Acting as an external auditor of the NHS North Central London Equality Impact Analysis (EQIA) Audit group. Focusing on our client group our views and opinions will help NHS North Central London deliver equitable commissioning and help to meet our public sector equality duties.
- Close partnership work with researches i.e. Hertfordshire University, Middlesex University and UCL, i.e. supported a pediatric junior registrar, doing masters in child community

health at UCL, to carry out carried out a research (interviewed 17 BRS clients- women), about healthcare service available for asylum seeking children, the concerns they may have over their children's/own health and to ensure these healthcare assessments are being carried out

- Working in partnership with Refugee Women Association and attracting 2.5 years funding from Health and Social Care Volunteering Fund with the aim to provide 24 walking therapy sessions, 15 workshops on food and nutrition for our clients and 15 health focused Mums & tots Groups
- Developing Ecotherapy activities i.e. gardening to support those with mental health issue in a green environment
- Providing one-one emotional support and group work
- Series of therapeutic weekly activities to refugee women with mental health problems, victims of DV, torture and rape. In partnership with artsdepot through our Women's Group, Jasmine. i.e. music therapy, art & craft, poetry, dance etc
- Working with in partnership with Iranian Kurdish Women's Association and attracted funding from the European Fund. This project was focused on Women on dependent visa with the focus on integration tackling isolation. Within this project we provided emotional support with one to one counselling, volunteering, ESOL classes and workshops.

Director's Report

In addition to the above BRS has been actively involved with NHS Barnet's different activities to promote a better health within the community i.e. Flu jab etc.

We are a resource to be drawn upon by health professionals to support them to support this client group and understand their needs better.

We were closely involved in policy work around provision of counselling and psychotherapy services for refugees and asylum seekers including young refugees.

We have been liaising and worked with service providers, in particular health professionals, statutory and voluntary sector staff to raise awareness about the physical and mental health needs of asylum seekers and refugees. In the past we used to provide training for service providers on refugee health issues but this year, due to cuts and shortage of staff we did not feel the demand was there. Instead we redesigned our training program and instead attending different network meetings and used the opportunity to talk about our clients and their needs. We provided 4 refugee awareness talks to our local schools in their assemblies, attended leaving care team meetings and had one to one meetings with those who were willing to know more about refugee issues.

Meeting Our Targets

We have met or exceeded all of the targets agreed with our funders which include:

- 1356 clients accessing services with (408 new)
- 7014 advice/general enquiries
- 465 client visits to emergency support drop in services
- 12 health promotion workshops
- 17 workshops on accessing health, housing and welfare benefits
- 460 clients accessed our service through outreach surgeries
- 85 users accessed employment and volunteering opportunities
- Over 50 women registered our Jasmine Women's Group
- Over 150 young people involved with our successful youth activities
- 149 clients attended our Immigration Drop in with visiting solicitors
- 13 Successful ESOL provision including 45 health related Lessons – 142 students
- 1 Successful Mothers & Toddlers Group in partnership with the Hyde Children Centre
- 1 Successful Men's Group (2 ESOL classes)
- 3 Job Club – 8 volunteers managed to get into paid employment
- Domestic Violence Befriending program
- Provision of a Holistic Model of Support including volunteering, emotional support, structured ESOL training and advice

Case Study 2

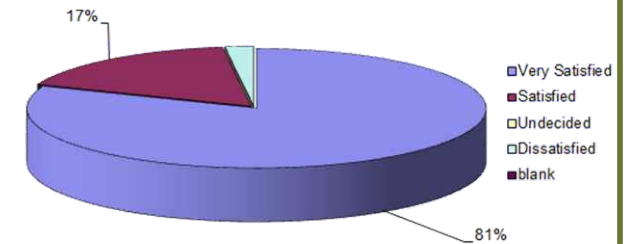
T is a 32 years old educated married young woman. Deeply depressed and lost, when she approached BRS she was not doing well and was going through a tough time because of her marital issues. In fact, very soon, when she joined her husband in UK, she realised she has been married with a man who is not loving/caring and above all is really critical of her. T felt she made a mistake by marrying a man who was domineering.

She came to BRS very confused, in the verge of divorce and not knowing what to do. She did not know about her rights in the UK and was confused how to make a right decision. Attending her one to one emotional support sessions on a weekly basis, helped her to regain her self-esteem and self-confidence. With the support of LT project she managed to step out of this abusive relationship. BRS helped T to enrol at university to fulfil her dream to become a maths teacher. She feels she has regained her confidence and trying to rebuild her life in the UK.

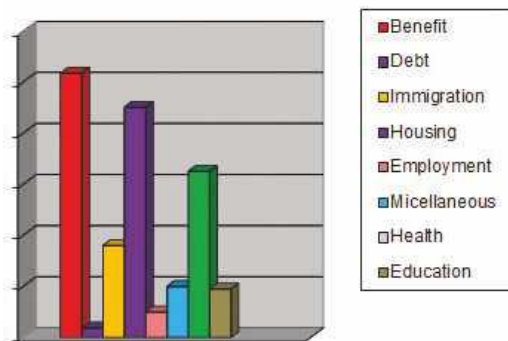
Director's Report

Customer Satisfaction Survey

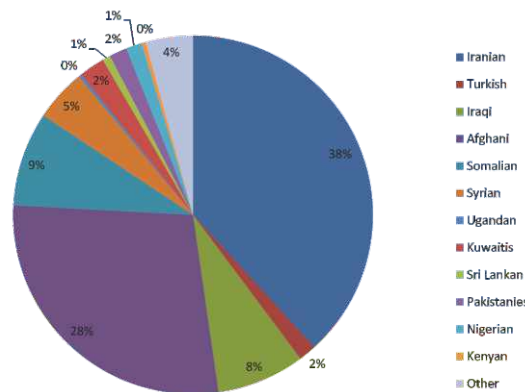
In order to retain our Advice Quality Standard of the Community Legal Service (CLS) as well as making sure we provide highest standard of service to our clients according to their needs, it is essential to have in place a feedback process for the clients we see. Throughout 2015/16 we randomly selected clients who had used our services and gave them questionnaires. Over all 200 questionnaires were distributed, out of that 179 were returned. According to the CLS / CDS Client Feedback Guide a normal response is between 25 – 30 %. Our response therefore is a healthy 89.5%. Out of the 179 questionnaires returned 81% felt 'very satisfied' with our services and 17% 'Satisfied' and 2% felt “we should improve in some areas”. Over all 79% felt the service they received improved the quality of their life. To access the full report on our client's evaluation please contacts our office.



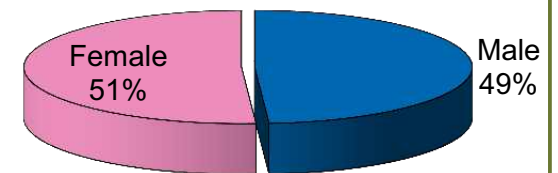
Enquiry Areas 2015-2016



Where our clients come from?



Client by Gender



Director's Report

Health Access Workshops

We are performing an essential link between NHS Barnet and refugees and asylum seekers in Barnet through our workshops and user group and as a patient representative, helping to increase understanding and raise awareness amongst health professionals of refugees' needs and issues and amongst refugees of their rights to health and their responsibilities in using the services.

12 Health Access workshops have been delivered to students of our ESOL classes, our Mums & Tots group and Women's Group. This total number of 96 people benefitted from these sessions.

The aim of these health talks is to ensure our client group is using health services adequately and appropriately. It covers the common services available, how to access them, what to do in an emergency or at the weekend or evening.

At these talks it was stressed how this information should be passed

around to all friends and family and a resource pack including information on local services was distributed.



Health Promotion workshops



During the past year, 17 Health Promotion workshops have been delivered to members of our Women's Group, ESOL students, Volunteers, Men's Group and our Mum's & Tots Group and Gardening Project participants. The workshops were delivered by Multilingual Well-being Services, Director of BRS, a GP trainee, Fire Brigade and other voluntary organisations and included the topic such as Assertiveness, Parenting the Teenagers, Women's and Children's health, Healthy Eating, Shopping on a tight budget, How to keep children's teeth healthy, Nutrition workshops, Top tips for making food last, Measuring health, Yoga sessions, Good/Bad foods, children's development, First Aid, Making our favorite meals healthier, Fire Safety, Healthy Mind Healthy Body, Mindfulness etc. Total number of 170 people benefitted from these sessions. We also provided health focused workshops for our young people at our social club, Drug and Alcohol, Domestic Violence amongst young people, Gang Violence and Knife Crime, CEPO/ Safer use of internet, Sexual Health, Smoking cessation, Healthy eating and Cooking sessions, Personal Hygiene and Pampering and Self-defense - Martial Arts.

LT Project

Life Transformation Project (LTP)

Funded by European Social Fund for 14 months this project was set up in partnership with two other organisations, Iranian Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation (IKWRO) and Refugee Women's Association (RWA) in June 2014. With IKWRO being the lead partner, this project was based on their experience working with third country nationals on their other project funded by European Fund, feedback of need analysis from two other partner organizations, RWA and BRS, as well as external reports produced by the external bodies i.e. Middlesex University 2011, or Migration Observatory 2013. This project was fitted well in BRS activities as it was in line our Holistic Model of Support. Our responsibility within this partnership was deliver Information, Advice and Guidance, structured ESOL classes, Volunteering Program, Emotional Support and Educational Outing and Workshop. The aim of this project was to increase integration and address isolation through intensive support; develop new ways of



teaching English such as voice coaching and mentoring/volunteering to help them feel more confident; provide intensive support through information, advice and emotional support. This pilot project ended in June 2015 when we evaluated internally. The results were overwhelmingly positive in showing that the LTP met it's goals. The holistic model of this service helped clients with their emotional and other needs and helped them with rebuilding their lives and promoted positive integration. It also showed that the service is appreciated by participants and partners, and it is still needed. The success of this venture put BRS in a strong position to build on this project and secure 3 years funding from the Big Lottery Fund from Dec 2016.

LTP Information Advice and Guidance

With the target of 50 we provided information and guidance to the 83 clients which included support on their practical issues such as, housing, welfare, education for themselves and their families, referral to solicitors on DV cases, finding shelter on DV cases, referral to social services, referral to our ESOL classes, referral for emotional support, raising fund for individuals experiencing financial hardships etc.

The evaluation of this activity confirmed that this service was real value to the participants who used

it, and find these extremely helpful. For example service users scored the service as 9 out of 10 in terms of impact, quality, and 9 out of 10 in terms of staff support.



LTP ESOL

With the support of Refugee Women's Association we delivered structured ESOL classes for 4 terms to 48 students throughout the life of the project. It was for the participants to learn English and develop skills for life preparing them to sit for an exam at the end which will help them in future application of citizenship. All students attended an assessment session to measure their level of English. Student attended the sessions twice a week and those with children had an opportunity to leave their children with a registered nursery. All their travelling expenses were paid. Students sat for an exam at the end of the Terms. 90% of our students passed their exam.

LT Project

The evaluation of this activity confirmed that this service is also a real value to the participants who attended it, and find these extremely useful. For example service users scored the service as 9 out of 10 in terms of quality of teaching, and 10 out of 10 in terms of other direct and indirect benefits, i.e. integration and tackling isolation.

Emotional Support

Many of women attending LT Project had small or non-existent social networks. They are extremely isolated. Few have had traumatic experiences including DV, torture, loss. This activity has been very vital for the women who used this service. We provided one to one counselling and emotional support to 30 women who sought this service. We paid their travelling expenses. Our counsellor's role did not end in providing just counselling. She was there to make sure the clients are accessing mental health services appropriately.



LTP Volunteering Program

BRS has years of experience delivering volunteering programs. Our experience shows that volunteering opportunities help immigrants to gain confidence, self-discipline and is a positive way to integration. It will also be a path into employment which can affect people's mental health and confidence. Many of the clients within LTP are well educated in their own country but their qualifications are not recognized in this country. The volunteering program within LTP program was a true success. We recruited 25 service users as volunteers who helped to deliver this project and BRS's other projects and worked alongside people from the native community to come together in helping overcome issues such as unemployment, lack of English language, low skills, and local knowledge. It also built understanding, tolerance and cross-culture friendships. Through their volunteering experience we provided them with one to one regular supervision and supported them to write their CVs, improving their interview skills and even found placement for them outside BRS. With our support, we had three clients from LTP who managed to get into paid employment. The evaluation of this activity confirmed that this service is also a true value to the participants who took part, and find these extremely beneficial. For example service users scored the service as 8.7 out of 10 in terms of quality of support, and 9 out of 10 in terms of other indirect benefits, i.e. integration and tackling isolation and improving their English.

Educational Workshops

Our clients have poor linguistic skills and little or no knowledge of the British “system”. They have also had little contact with the native British or BME communities. All of these facts slow their integration with the wider community. Through LTP we provided 4 community cohesion workshops including understanding the concept of integration, learning about local and national government, voting rights, women's rights in the UK i.e. Domestic Violence as well as 4 educational visits to museums etc.

The evaluation of each individual activity confirmed that these activities are also a real value to the participants who attended it, and find these extremely helpful. For example service users scored the effect of these activities an average of 8 out of 10.



Director's Report

Case Study 2

Ophelie De Cuyper



Six months internship at Barnet Refugee Service: An outstanding experience

After I got my Belgian Law degree in September 2015, I wasn't sure about my career in Belgium. I wanted to discover other cultures and to expand my knowledge abroad in the field of asylum. Thanks to European Placement Network, I had the possibility to get a grant and to spend six months working in the United Kingdom. After being selected, Farida

Stanikzai decided to give me a chance as her intern at Barnet Refugee Service, a charity with values that I cherish today.

This experience has been a great success at all levels: professional, personal and cultural. I came back home being more mature, more qualified, more confident and maybe more important; knowing exactly what I want to do: to help needy people.

My work at BRS has been really diversified. I have been involved in almost every activity. I could then learn how a charity works in general. Working closely with Farida has been a great pleasure. Despite the fact that she is always busy, she found time to explain everything to me.

I met extraordinary people at BRS. The kindness of my colleagues and clients amazed me every day. I learned there that we are one big family, united by solidarity, love and hope.

Today I am a trainee lawyer in a law firm and a teaching assistant at University. I am still working everyday with people from other cultures and religions, with vulnerable people like immigrants and refugees, with people who are brave and fighting for their rights. I love my jobs. I am putting all my heart and energy in it. Thanks to Barnet Refugee Service, I have been well prepared;

I became open-minded and willing to help others in my everyday job. My future step would be to create my own charity in Brussels.

This is now the way I see things: « *I don't want to live in the kind of world where we don't look out for each other. Not just the people that are close to us, but anybody who needs a helping hand. I can't change the way anybody else thinks, or what they choose to do, but I can do my bit* ».

Charles de Lint

Case Study 3

Vivien Chappell
Volunteer ESOL Teacher



I have worked for charities all my life so when a friend suggested teaching at BRS I was immediately interested.

I am relatively new to teaching having only qualified 10 years ago when I turned 60. After my graduation I was offered an ESOL teaching job at the Working Mens College which is a huge college in the middle of Camden that has excellent facilities and is culturally exciting and diverse.

After working there for 8 years I retired to look after my husband who suffers from Parkinsons Disease. I missed teaching a great deal and was thrilled when a part-time volunteer teaching post came up at BRS.

During my two years here at BRS I really enjoyed teaching at BRS. I have had some wonderful students from Somalia, Afghanistan, Iran, Eritrea and even as far as China. Without exception, they have all been really keen students and I look forward to coming to BRS on Tuesday and Friday mornings. We always have a lot of fun.

The staff at BRS are all very supportive and delightful people and I find this particular volunteering experience a wonderful distraction from my daily chores.

ESOL Classes

Barnet Refugee Service ESOL classes have been set up to provide language support for refugees and asylum seekers who are unable to access classes at Adult Education Colleges.

Due to cuts to ESOL funding the demand for classes at BRS has significantly increased. The number of classes has gone from 3 to 9.

Most of these students struggle to integrate and feel socially isolated. They come from different backgrounds, some have high level academic qualifications gained in their home country and others have never had the opportunity to attend school and are completely illiterate. Despite these differences, what seems to bring these classes together is a genuine motivation to learn, and students are passionate not only to learn to improve their English but also to restore their self-esteem.

This year BRS managed successfully to attract 43 women who were hard to reach, as some of them were not in the habit of leaving their home



environment due to lack of confidence, some never have been to school in their home country and finding the whole idea extremely daunting.

The teachers not only taught English language skills but also helped them to cope with their new cultural background. They provided a welcoming, friendly and safe environment where the students could meet each other, make friends, build up their confidence and also receive support to overcome their fears. There is a true sense of respect and community amongst the students. They have a

“I have been here for 5 years but my husband did not let me go to college. He only lets me to go to BRS for English lessons”

chance to experiment with their English, express their worries, and realise they are not isolated anymore.

There are nineteen volunteer English teachers and eight volunteer teachers' assistants who provide 18 lessons per week. Some of these class assistants are mentored by our British born ESOL teachers to enable them get experience and find employment.

The classes are informal on different levels ranging from pre- Entry to Level One and last an hour and a half twice a week. The teachers help their students

to gain the basic necessary skills and confidence in spoken English as well as to improve their written, listening and reading skills using the Skills for Life coursework as well as their own material.

Most importantly, these lessons offer the basic skills the students will need in their everyday life e.g. going to the doctor's or making appointments to meet a teacher at their child's school.

I feel I am a different person now



ESOL Team from right: Sara Hessabi, Jill Joseph, Kathryn Salomon, Annisa Darling, Helen Syani, Sima Rutherford, Amanda West, Ros Staines, Orna Almagor, Rosemary Biseo, Ophelie Decuyper Vivien Chappell, Zahra Alizadeh and Mojdeh Hajifathaliyan

Not in the picture: Sandra Green, Elizabeth Perrot, Helen Stone, Susan Stewart, Sylvia Sander, Heather Gross, Sandra Green, Monira Hosseini, Sylvia Sandler, Hayrullah Lata, Tania Azevedo, Alison Stein, Rahila Amiry, Naima Aminuddin, Madeline Ioannidis, Fabiha Haq, Hawa Bibi Muhammad and Polly Rockberger

Youth Activities

Astrid Filippi



Young people matter today and are our future, so our youth work activities are a vital and very successful part of our organisation. Refugee and asylum seeking young people are

amongst the most vulnerable and challenging in borough of Barnet, also being new in the country a lot of them have poor social skills and struggle with basics. Through our activities, we enable young people to develop their voice, influence, build confidence and place in the society while reaching their full potential.

Throughout 2015/16 we continued with minimal resources and managed to continue our youth program. Thanks to the John Lyon's Charity whose financial support allowed us to provide a range of recreational activities to these vulnerable young people. In Dec 2015 we managed to secure a 3 years grant from the John Lyons Charity who helped us to develop our youth work further. During the year provided one to one and group advice, support, group activities and ultimately helping young refugees emotional and social developments in an informal setting but through educational processes, mostly in borough of Barnet and neighbouring boroughs as well.

Our aim is to provide an opportunity for learning which complements that of formal education, also

preparing young refugees to tackle a whole spectrum of issues, and through group work (activities) help them develop supportive relationships with other young people, and opening their eyes to new experiences, confidence building, ambitions and empathy.



Weekly Social Club

For the ninth year going we continued our activities within our Youth Social Club but with limited activities due to the financial strain. This is a mixed group (boys and girls) aged 12-18 years old who met every Wednesday at Orion School in Mill Hill. We moved the club to Northwest Centre in Grahame Park Way where the average of 8 young people met every Thursday evening and participated in different activities. These young people come from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities such as Iran, Afghanistan, Albania, Somalia and Libya.

At the Youth Club, our young people regularly

enjoyed football table, table tennis and pool. We also played football outdoor when the weather was good. We organised basketball sessions in partnership with the SHAPE programme within Barnet Council Community Sport Team, and our young people were offered to attend basketball sessions free of charge.

We also screened educational films such as “Symphony of the Soil” and “Forrest Gump” which raised discussions about the environment and the importance to preserve it as well as about people's diversity.

Cooking Sessions

We organised cooking sessions during which young people explored themes such as healthy eating and cooking healthy meals with a low budget. We tried new and exotic meals including Italian and Brazilian dishes!

Everyone was encouraged to participate in the preparation, including young people with disabilities. We also focused on ground rules, and young people were prompted to give their input about those rules, which we created all together.



Youth Activities

Visit to RAF Museum

We organised a session with the R.A.F. (Royal Air Force Museum) where young people did some art & craft while learning about the history of pilots who participated in the Second World War, some of whom also came from ethnic minorities backgrounds. Our Young People had the chance to wear some original outfits from that historical period which were part of the R.A.F. Museum heritage.



Myths and Legends Summer Workshop

With the full involvement of the young people and the support of the John Lyons Charitable Trust we ran this summer project over six weeks during summer holidays. Led by our art consultant, David Curtis-Ring, the young people attended two workshops per week using the theme of 'Myths and Legends'. This interactive project engaged the young people in



creative storytelling through different arts related activities such as, a music day-workshop, a photo shoot, photoshop classes or mask making. The focus was to encourage participants to create their own fantasy character costume

which was based around a personal narrative or memory as well as being completely fictional or imaginary. These 'story costumes' then became part of a 'myths and legends' procession involving each participant, involving music. Throughout the course young people visited the National Theatre (NT) twice, where they had the chance to make a theatre model inspired by the NT version of Frankenstein. They learnt about scale and the processes involved in designing a set for stage and gave the play their own twist. They also learnt how to make a personalised antique book prop, saw backstage at the NT where sets are built and did a puppet workshop where they created and activated puppets in small groups.

The feedback from our young people confirms that it was an enjoyable activity for them making it a successful project. Our special thanks must go the John Lyon Charitable Trust, the group leader, David. Curtis- Ring, our youth worker, Anita Koci and our young volunteers to make this project a success.



Director's Report

The UK Youth Parliament

The UK Youth Parliament provides opportunities for 11-18 year olds to use their elective voice to bring about social change through meaningful representation and campaigning.

BRS nominated one of our young clients, Erfan Amiry to stand for election as a Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) to represent child refugees.

He was supported and guided by one of the BRS's Trustees to take this wonderful opportunity to provide a voice the child refugees. He was amongst the 12 top candidates, and got a certificate of achievement.

When we asked Erfan about his experience on this he told us: *“thanks to BRS I learnt a lot about the voting system and how to cast a vote. I also learnt about democracy and how to campaign for issues close to our hearts. I also had the opportunity to develop my communication, Public speaking, teamwork and debating skills and I will definitely participate next year.*



Life in the UK' English Classes

The Life in the UK Citizen Test has become an integral part of British immigration policy. It is a computer based test which is a compulsory requirement for anyone seeking Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK or for anyone seeking naturalisation as a British Citizen.

There was a high demand for this class from our client group. We managed to pilot and run the first round of the course from April to July 2016. Twelve regular students who eagerly participated in this 24 session course successfully completed it. They started out with insufficient knowledge of English to understand the basic training book for UK citizenship. BRS helped them by teaching every

chapter clearly and concisely. The teacher prepared every lesson as a diagram with colorful markers to simplify the topic and thereby make it more interesting for the students. The book proved to be an enormous success: so much so that the students were pleading for their lesson time to be extended!

We feel that this pilot project has been very successful and wish to attract funding to continue running it. Our special thanks must go to our anonymous donor without whom it would have not been possible to run this pilot project.



Director's Report

Case Study 5



Michael M.
Service User/Volunteer

I fled Burundi in 2002 as I feared for my life; I was exposed to political and tribal tensions and conflict in my country at that time. In 2003 I sought asylum with the hope of remaining in this country UK but until now I have not been granted status and I am still waiting for a decision on my fresh claim!

I am still struggling to survive on a daily basis as I live in a shelter and experience homelessness and lack of privacy. I have lived without any Government support other than handouts from various charities over the years. I am highly traumatised by my experiences and suffer from enduring post-traumatic stress disorder and depression which is intensified during periods of stress.

I have been inspired by listening to these young student's reactions and one of the most asked questions was, "What did you bring with you when you were fleeing the country?" and my reply was, "Nothing, but memories". People seem concerned that I have been homeless for such a long time without support and they realise, only too well, what a roof over my head would mean to me.

I am speechless at times about what I have to say about myself even when I am asked to speak before the audience, but it is very encouraging to realise

that each one of us has a human feel and we are all struggling with one thing or another.

What do you reply when someone asks you "How was your day?" when you have had to kill the hours before the hostel reopens without any semblance of a routine or even enough for a bus fare in your pocket? It is a question that stumps Michael who has no ID card either, and he vividly communicates the unending sense of futility of "people who are at the sea level of their own hopes. You mourn your own life".

My involvement with BRS as a volunteer came at a



time when I saw no routine, no value, and as a homeless asylum seeker with poor health it was very difficult to take up the challenge till Farida reassured me of the support and encouraged me to start with mens group and English classes.

It was encouraged to meet up with over 60 year old men and youth whose desire to learn English was so

powerful. And on week week I was amazed at the pace of their memory they could write their Addresses and post code with ease from when they walked in unlike before when they relied on calling a relative to explain.

I was later involved with speaking at school and churches and Synagogues in group talks. Supported by Farida we spoke in different schools and meeting the youth and children has been so inspiring to me in a sense that I have had to explain my past my present and at least have someone listen to me without being judged and create awareness to the community about asylum and refugee struggles here and abroad. I am equally empowered by the sense of appreciation and love we received as BRS team and how we have impacted change in our community and this has made me to feel part of the community and voluntary work has uplifted my spirits and hope even when I am still struggling to survive in these hard times of having no support and not able to work and having no status however long I have lived here now 13 Years. I am overwhelmed by the fact that for some time now when I walk in at the BRS office we are all treated and greeted with love and respect and when I see many people come in for help it reduces my pain to appreciate the work they are doing. I cannot say it all but finally I would call upon any one to challenge themselves however much low they may feel this has left me feeling much much different and with a sense of purpose in my life and reaching out to others in our communities.

Women's Group (Jasmine)



For the 9th year running, the Jasmine Women's Group had another fruitful year. The group continues meeting every week on Fridays at the Sacred Heart Church in Mill Hill. The aim of this project is to support isolated BMER women and specifically supporting those with mental health issues through psych-social activities. The attendance has been an average of about 15 participants each week from 11 different countries, including Iran, Afghanistan, the Congo, Eritrea, Turkey (Kurdish,) Zimbabwe, Kosovo. Newcomers have come via friends from within the group, but referrals are also received from outside agencies such as social services, women refuges, GPs, IAPT and refugee organisations.



Jasmine is an important venue for women, most of whom are isolated & lonely. We provide a safe place to socialise, meet & make new friends & to acclimatise. In some instances an outing to the Jasmine group session is the only thing they attend outside their homes. We reimburse participants' bus fares. This is a necessity to enable those women without recourse to public funds who are destitute to attend.

In the sessions, we continue to concentrate on English, spoken & written. We play word games – our equivalent of hangman, crosswords etc – based on recent outings etc. We have had sessions on energy-saving, academic research on refugees, First Aid instruction from the St John's Ambulance, outing at Kew Gardens, regular yoga & relaxation sessions, visits to the BRS allotment. Thanks to our professional volunteer artist, Farzaneh Yousefi, whom by delivering workshops on jewelries making managed to get the ladies to make jewelries which were sold to support part of the Jasmine group's cost.



We have had Health workshops in conjunction with the Multi-lingual Wellbeing service on different aspects of mental & physical health, eg stress management, depression, healthy eating, stroke, breast cancer, diabetes, dementia. Where possible we have also had an interpreter to help those whose English is weak to be fully included in the health sessions. This has proved most valuable.

“Jasmine gave my life back”

We feel we had another flourishing year. Our special thanks must go to our donors, our dedicated volunteers, Elsa Shamash, Jane Clegg & Daliese Donato, and in particular our women's group co-ordinator Tanya Novick. We are also grateful to the support of the Church of Sacred Heart, Mill Hill to provide us with the venue free of charge. We also thank Yarok (greengrocer) & Orli Café, both of Edgware who supply Jasmine with fruit, bread & cakes to help the sessions go well.



Director's Report

Men's Group



We are pleased to report the success of our Men's Group for the 5th year running. The club provides a healthy breakfast and creates a friendly and welcoming atmosphere at the North West Community Centre to refugee and asylum seeking men. The participants are able to take part in psycho-social activities i.e. yoga classes, English improvement sessions, educational board games and outings. They will also have opportunity to enjoy breakfast, read a newspaper & socialise in a friendly atmosphere. In addition we run health promotion workshops for them and attend to any problems that the participants may be experiencing. We are deeply grateful for the support of Prêt à Manger, The Gails & Lola Cakes for their supplies of food and the North West Community Centre for providing us with free venue.



We are also very thankful to our committed volunteers, without whom the club could not exist and in particular our Men's Club's Coordinator, Abdul Moghrabi.

Mothers and Toddlers Group

Our Mums' and Toddlers' is thriving continuously. And we are pleased to report on this successful project for the 6th time. This project is in partnership with the Hyde Children's Centre where every Tuesday morning an average of 12 refugee women



come along with their babies and pre-school toddlers. Sessions are held in cheerful, modern surroundings, in a room well-stocked with toys, games and art materials, which also have access to its own outdoor play area. There is always a minimum of two volunteers on hand to share the tasks of occupying the children while their mothers are learning English. Lessons are geared to Pre-Entry level, as many of the mums speak little or no English. Taught by a qualified ESOL teacher, lessons are health focused, on practical vocabulary - parts of the body, food, safety in the house, and conversation practice involves talking about, for instance, daily routines, going shopping, and going to the doctor. The group is relaxed, very sociable - and extremely willing to help one another, and to join in singing games and action songs with their children. During the past year series of health focused workshops was delivered to this group i.e. healthy eating, oral hygiene for the kids, fire safety, breast awareness etc. This year the number of students dramatically increased from 8 regular students and 2 to 3 children to 12 women and 8 children due to the hard work of the teacher and the quality of the course. This project is well-integrated with the Children's Centre. Our special thanks must go to the Hyde Children's Centre for accommodating this group and their staff. The feedback from the attendees confirms that this is a well - placed partnership which maximises the support the mothers are getting. Our special gratitude goes to an anonymous donor who has been financially supporting this group.



“ My child can sing in English now' ”

Gardening

Sowing Seeds Gardening Project

In April 2015, under our Eco-therapy program, we established a new project called “Sowing Seeds Therapy”/Allotment Project to promote good mental and physical wellbeing of refugees and asylum seekers through outdoor activity in a green environment (Eco-therapy), tackling social isolation, encouraging integration and improving community cohesion with emphasis on those with mental health issues. With securing an allotment site in Barnet (Pointalls Allotment) we managed attract a one year seed grant from the London Catalyst to run this project.

The sessions run twice a week on Mondays & Fridays from 10am to 2pm. Majority of attendees experience isolation and depression as a result of their immigration and asylum system. Being outdoors, learning new skills and socialising with other clients as well as members of the allotment site proved to be beneficial to all of them. With the support of a professional volunteer gardener the clients have an opportunity to plant a variety of British vegetables as well as seeds from their countries of origin. We also have weekly cookery sessions at the allotment where clients prepare dishes from around the world using seasonal vegetables and sharing them with all.

BRS allotment is also registered with the Capital Growth which also includes the Edible Open Gardens and Big Dig days scheme. They provide us

with discounted training on how to grow organic vegetable and how to save seeds.

We held a food celebration event in November which coincided with the Barnet Refugee Service 10th Anniversary. Over 140 people attended, this included clients, staff, and members of the allotment site and project partners. This was another chance to promote cultural exchange through food. Over 20 dishes were prepared from around the world by the BRS allotment team. We also compiled a recipe book of these dishes which will be ready and published by April 2017.

We feel this has been a fruitful project. Our special thanks must go to our donors and in particular the London Catalyst for allowing us to plant the seeds of this project. We also thank our our dedicated volunteers and in particular our Gardening Project lead, Ahmed Lolai, who tirelessly worked so hard to transfer our allotment into a beautiful garden.



Gardening

Health and Wellbeing Workshops

As majority of our clients are on low income and live below the poverty line, it is important to increase their knowledge about nutritious food especially for families with young children. During last year we delivered 12 health nutrition workshops at the allotment with 50 clients attending. The sessions included how to maintain good mental health, learnt about the uses of some basic crops/ herbs, made a herbal infusion, how to make an all-purpose ointment using calendula flowers and making good herbal teas, measuring health, good/bad foods, shopping on a tight budget, top tips for making food last longer, making our favourite meals healthier, meditation and exercise. We thank the Regent's Park Allotment Garden / Capital Growth and volunteer nutritionists to facilitate the workshops for us.



Volunteering



Farida Stanikzai
Operations Manager

Barnet Refugee Service has over 7 years of experience delivering volunteering programs. Our experience shows that volunteering opportunities help immigrants to gain confidence, self-discipline and is a positive way to integration. It will also be a path into employment which can affect people's mental health and confidence.

Volunteers are essential force in delivering our activities. They are integral to our work and their commitment, skills, and life experiences are an enormous asset to us.

Volunteering, especially for people from refugee background, can create an opportunity to try out new and different occupations in the new UK environment. This is particularly relevant in a context where many refugees experience a societal process of de-skilling through non-recognition of their qualifications. Our experience of running a successful this volunteering program for over six years confirms that volunteering can not only help refugees and asylum seekers develop new skills, improve their employability and support improving their language skills but also helps strengthen their integration with the local community and supports developing links with the wider community. Nearly 50% of our volunteers have a refugee background some of whom are BRS ex- service users. They work closely with volunteers from British society which creates

mutual understanding between individuals and communities.

This year in particular due to the expansion of the organisation and the introduction of new services BRS has relied more on an increased number of volunteers who provide support in every aspect of the services we offer. They provide support in every aspect of the services we provide: Advice, ESOL, Peer Support, Mother and Toddler Group, Women's Group, Employment support through our Job Club,



Girls Group, Youth Social Club, Workshops, Gardening, Outings, Health Walks, Men's Breakfast Club, Outreach, Interpreting and event organisation.

There has been a number of training sessions taking place for Barnet Refugee Service volunteers and internally and externally, there has been ongoing support to the volunteers in various posts, including one-to-ones and supervisions. Some of our volunteers have also managed to secure volunteer placements in other organisations. To support the local community we also take students from local schools for work placements to gain valuable work experience and an insight of charity work. We also managed to develop connections

with the European Placement Network (European Traineeship) where we accepted volunteers for work placements internationally. During the last year we had 3 young professionals from United States, Japan and Belgium to work at BRS as interns.

This year BRS has supported three volunteer advisers in gaining accreditation with the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC). We are proud to announce that through this successful program 6 of our volunteers managed to get into paid employment.

We would like to thank our funder The City Bridge Trust for supporting this essential up to the July 2015. We were lucky to attract funding from the Big Lottery Fund for the continuation of this service for 3 years and we are grateful for their support. Also our special thanks go to our Volunteers Operation Manager, Farida Stanikzai for her continuous passion, dedication and excellent work.

“In this life we cannot always do great things but we can do small thing with great love!”
Mother Theresa



Our Volunteers

Trustees

Ponusamy Karunaharan
David Levey
Dr Zoe Aslanpour
Tanya Novick
Roger Selby
Shubhi Raymond
Peter Salomon
Golnar Bokaei

Men's Group volunteers

Abdulwahab Moghrabi
Shakib Murshed
Begonia Aloy
Charles Posner
Ophelie Decuyper
David Brodie

Volunteer Advisers

Sodabeh Gashtasebi
Parisa Sadeghi
Tirza Waisel
Nima Mahdavian

Events Volunteer

Razieh Noromand
Nima Mahdavian
Zohreh Shahrabi
Shalina Khanom

Admin and Office Support Volunteers

Zohreh Shahrabi
Simone Fergus
Ophelie Decuyper
Finance and book keeping

Fahimeh Afshinrad
Somayeh Habibzadeh
Shaerzad Hamidi

Women's Group

Tanya Novick
Elsa Shamash
Poppy Szaybo
Dalies Donato
Mahtab Azizi
Jane Clegge
Farzaneh Yousefi

Design/ IT Support

Saleh Mohamed Abuewilly
Reza Izadi

ESOL volunteers

Kathryn Salomon
Sandra Green
Elizabeth Perrot
Ros Staines
Rosemary Biseo
Helen Stone
Susan Stewart
Orna Almagor
Sylvia Sander
Mojdeh Hajifathaliyan
Heather Gross
Sandra Green
Monira Hosseini
Sylvia Sandler
Hayrullah Lata
Tania Azevedo
Alison Stein
Vivien Chappell

Annisa Pryor
Jill Joseph
Rahila Amiry
Helen Syani
Amanda West
Sima Rutherford
Naima Aminuddin
Madeline Ioannidis
Katharine Sathe
Fabiha Haq
Hawa Bibi Muhammad
Polly Rockberger
Zahra Alizadeh

Mother and Toddler Group

Sara Hessabi
Fatima Najibullah
Zahra Khanum
Patricia Peiris

Youth Work Volunteers

Alessandro Filizzola
Farzaneh Yousefi
Ophelie Decuyper
David Curtis-Ring

Volunteer Interpreters

Rahela Amiry
Ahmed Aissouf
Adila Badri
Dr. Helal Attayee
Ammar Bajboj.
Patricia Peiris

Volunteer Advocate

Dr. Helal Atayee

Val Davies
Rahela Amiry
Ahmed Aissouf
Adila Badri
Ammar Bajboj.

Emotional Support

Mariam Keshavarz

Gardening/ Allotment

Ahmed Lolai
Fatimeh Pakizehrad
Adila Badri
Zahra Abbasi
Natalia Wyroda

Feel Good Group

Rosalind Nelson
Shalina Khanom

Homework Club

Zainab Seedat
Cormac Caswell
Noor Abedin



Our Volunteers



Volunteers Party 2016

We make a living with what we get but we make a life by what we give! A VERY BIG THANK YOU to all our volunteers!!!

Director's Report

Hosting Volunteers from the Civil Service Volunteering Scheme

This year Barnet Refugee Service liaised closely with the Home Office (European Migration Network) to set up a volunteering scheme. Four Home Office employees started volunteering with us at our women's group, and gardening project.



The feedback we got from our clients proves that this is a positive collaboration which allows our clients and colleagues from the Home Office to experience close relationship, learning about each other, hence bridging the gaps. Our clients come from countries where facing authorities can be a daunting experience and strongly believe that this sort of opportunities help our clients to have a better understanding and put more positive cast on the Home office's image European Evaluation Team. During Refugee Week our clients were invited to share their experiences with the Home Office employees

Feedback from the Home Office Staff

“An excellent and necessary initiative. I was moved by the stories that were told. I definitely agree with the BRS that more events of this kind would be really valuable, and would be happy to help out in facilitating this.”

“It would seem particularly valuable that colleagues from IE and Border Force attended events of this nature in future.”

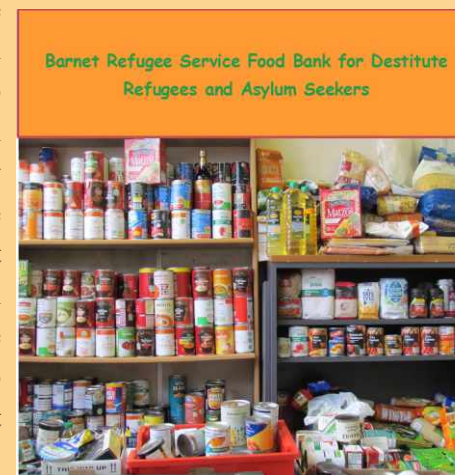
“Please pass on my sincere thanks to BRS and their clients for their bravery in sharing their stories in a context which must have been daunting. The clients that I met were enormously earnest, articulate and open, and I feel that I learnt a great deal about the empathise whilst acting professionally.”

“I think that hearing directly from the people affected by Home Office activity provides insights and perspectives that are new or have been forgotten and which can inform day-to-day work.”

Drop In for Destitute Asylum Seekers

Destitution is a huge problem amongst asylum seekers, one that pushes them to the brink of our society. Asylum seekers have to wait months or years for the outcome of their asylum claim, during which they are prohibited from working and only receive minimal or no financial support. As a result, asylum seekers are reliant on charities and their limited social networks to make ends meet.

We have been running a Drop In to support destitute asylum seekers since 2006 and due to lack of funding for the past 4 years, we have been operating this project from our main office in Hyde House. This essential project has continued to flourish with 1200 visits last year. Our Drop In is currently providing emergency food and clothing to destitute asylum seekers and refugees while they are in transition period. This service has been funded by kind donations of individuals, schools, Harrow Food Bank and local faith groups. During the year food and toiletries were donated from numerous schools, individuals, groups, churches, temples and synagogues. Linking with the National Zakat Foundation, Al-Mizan Charity, Churches Hardship Fund, Catholic Women's League and many other small funders, we managed to raise fund for individual destitute clients where they received the support in the form of cash or supermarket vouchers. Our special Thanks go to all those donors and to those who donated their harvest collection to BRS.



Director's Report

Celebrating Our 10th Anniversary

In November 2015 we celebrated our 10th anniversary. We had an interesting and engaging AGM/party this year with the hall filled up completely with all our clients, supporters, donors, voluntary and statutory colleagues and local councillors. The birthday party, at St Mary's Church Hall, in Hendon, was attended by more than 150 people who enjoyed a film, cultural dancing, some homemade birthday cake made by a volunteer, and the chance to have homemade lunch from different countries (all cooked by our Women's Group) and do some networking.

The meeting was opened by our Chair, Dr. Zoe Aslanpour followed by a short speech by the Mayor of Barnet, Cllr Mark Shooter who attended the party with his wife, the Mayoress Melissa Shooter.

Dr Nayeem Azim, a refugee from Afghanistan who is working as a practising GP in Hendon



(Grovemead Health Centre) was our special guest speaker. Dr. Azim is credited with setting up a programme which enabled refugee doctors to practice in the UK and has been supporting BRS since the beginning of our establishment. We also had our service users talking about their experiences in the UK and shared their views about BRS.



We had dancing performers including an Odissi Dancer (Indian) Priyanka Basu and Perso Zouk dancers, Sara and Parham. Sara is a former asylum seeker who came to London aged 17. Twenty years on she has begun to learn dance after beating breast cancer as an alternative to various medical treatments and as a way to beat stress.

The rewarding feedback from our guests confirms that they were highly entertained and praised our hard work supporting this vulnerable client group.

This certainly drives us on to work even harder to provide consistently high quality service for refugees and asylum seekers who have been marginalised and are mostly in need of support.



Director's Report

End of Year Party 2015

Every year Barnet Refugee Service organises a party for our client families.

The party offers a rare opportunity to those seeking asylum or recently granted the right to settle here, to have a few hours recreation and socialising.

Father Christmas gives presents to all the children. For many of them these will be the first presents they have received in a long, long time.

Once again this year's party was organised in partnership and with the support St Matthias Church. The party was held at St Matthias Community Centre, Colindale on Tuesday 22nd December 2015

**“I had the best time in my life since I came to the UK!”
9 year old from Afghanistan**

Around 200 clients attended at least half of whom were children. There was food, live music, entertainment including a children's club, Odissi Indian dance, Drumming, Zuke Dance as well as Santa Claus who handed out 150 presents to the kids. We were fortunate to have the help of over 20 volunteers without whose participation none of this would have been possible. The volunteers worked very hard and effectively together to facilitate the smooth running of the party. Our special thanks go to the local schools, faith groups and individual donors who provided us with cash and gifts for Santa's Grotto.



Director's Report

World Mental Health Day In Barnet 2015



In England mental ill health is very common, and at least 1 in 6 people will be affected by it at some point in their lives. World Mental Health Day (WMHD) is held every year on 10th October to raise awareness, support prevention and lobby for more funding for mental health related issues. As in previous years the WMHD planning group felt it was important to localise mental health activities by joining festivals and cultural events in the Borough and developing a holistic approach to enable a wide spectrum of Barnet residents to have equal access to local services, including those presently hindered from engaging with services due to cultural barriers, stigma or a lack of knowledge of where to find mental health services.

Once again BRS, as planning group member, along side 20 other organisations marked the World Mental Health Day with organising five events across different parts of the Borough. This was to de-stigmatise mental illness within local communities and gave people the opportunity to talk about mental illness in a more positive way. A final celebration event was held at Shree Aden Mitra Mandal Depala Centre, East Finchley attended by 170 people. We believe that we were able to raise awareness and over 2500 people were reached throughout the year in Barnet.



Multilingual Wellbeing Service (MWS)

Multilingual Wellbeing Services is a consortium of Black Minority Ethnic and Refugee community organisations in Barnet with an expertise in mental health and wellbeing.

The consortium was set up in June 2010 as a separate legal entity and got registered as a Charity in 2012. The partner organisations are Barnet Refugee Service, Chinese Mental Health Association and Farsophone Association. As a board member and an active member of this consortium during the past year BRS has been MWS to achieve its aims and objectives. We also supported MWS to achieve its targets agreed with its main funder, Big Lottery Fund.

The aim of this project is to improve the mental health of BMER communities in Barnet by increasing their knowledge and confidence in accessing support, supporting BMER mental health services to provide support to others suffering mental distress in their community.

We are pleased to announce that this project is flourishing, continuously providing mental health promotion workshops, training mental health advocates, recruiting volunteers from different communities and providing counselling services in a range of different community languages either through partners or through Associate Counsellors. MWS is currently working in partnership with Surrey & Boarder Partnership Foundation NHS Trust as part of providing Improvement Access to Psychological services (IAPT) in Barnet.

MWS
Multilingual Wellbeing Services

Financial Information

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2016

	2016 Unrestricted funds £	2016 Restricted funds £	2016 Total £	2015 Total £
income Resources				
Incoming resources from generated funds				
Voluntary Income	32,623	13,778	46,401	40,093
Grants	0	31,735	31,735	78,401
Interest receivable	132	0	132	181
Other Incoming Resources	0	116,619	116,619	98,969
Total incoming resources	32,755	162,132	194,887	217,644
Resources Expended:-				
Cost of charitable activities	29,755	165,181	194,936	214,003
Governance Costs	3,620	0	3,620	2,948
Total resources expended	33,375	165,181	198,556	216,951
Net income/(outgoing) resources before transfer between funds	(620)	(3,049)	(3,669)	693
Gross transfer between funds	0	0	0	0
Net movements in funds	(620)	(3,049)	(3,669)	693
Total funds at 1 April 2015	53,243	0	53,243	52,550
Total funds at 31st March 2016	52,623	3,049	49,574	53,243

Trustees Statment

The above statement has been extracted from the accounts prepared by Ashley Nathoo & Co and were approved by the Trustees of Barnet Refugee Service on 16th November 2016. The full report will be submitted to the Charities Commission and to the Companies House in due course. Copies of full report can be obtained from the Director of Barnet Refugee Service.

Zoe Aslanpour
Chair

Our Major Funders for 2015/16

- NHS Barnet & Barnet Council
- The City Bridge Trust
- The Big Lottery Fund
- The John Lyon's Charity
- The National Zakat Foundation
- The Catholic Women's League
- Al-Mizan Charitable Trust
- The London Catalyst
- The Catholic Women's League
- London Churches Refugee Fund
- The Ruth Hyman Trust

Donations

We would be very grateful if you would consider supporting our work financially. If you wish to give us a Donation, please fill out the form below.

I enclose my donation to Barnet Refugee Service to help you provide vital support to destitute asylum seekers and refugees in Barnet.

Cheque (payable to Barnet Refugee Service) for
£_____ enclosed

Please complete the following Gift Aid Declaration as this allows us to claim tax back from the Inland Revenue on your donation without any extra cost to you.

Barnet Refugee Service
(Registered Charity No: 1107965)
Gift Aid Donation Form

Full Name

Address

Post Code

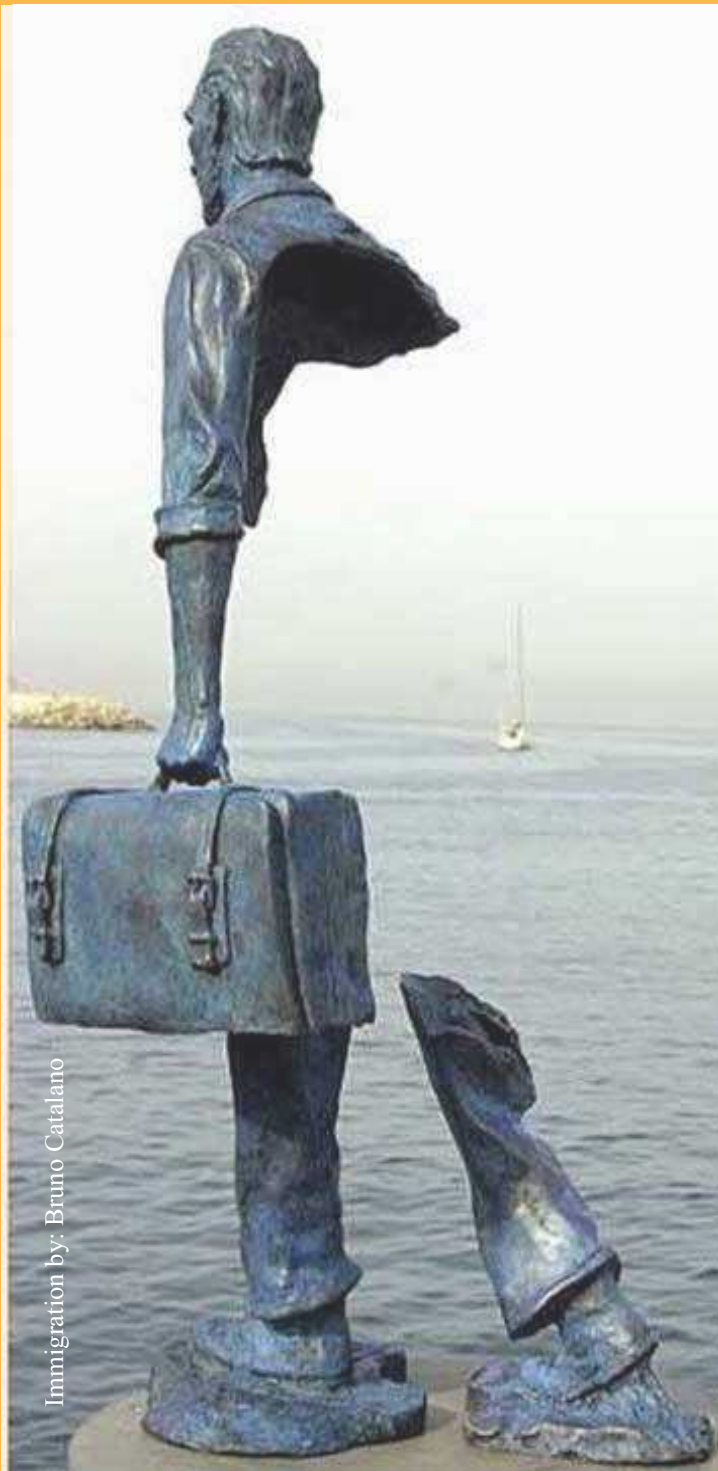
Declare that I want Barnet Refugee Service to reclaim tax on my Donation of £ and any future donation until I inform you otherwise.

Signed

Date : ____/____/____

Note: You must Pay an amount of income tax or capital gains tax equal to the tax we reclaim on your Donation currently 28p for every £1 you give.

**Please return this form with your donation to:
Barnet Refugee Service,
Hyde House
The Hyde, London NW9 6LH**



Immigration by: Bruno Catalano

BARNET REFUGEE SERVICE

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control [article 25(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights].

